DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 273 977 CS 210 044

AUTHOR Logan, Lloyd; And Others
TITLE The Year in the Schools. Handwriting Implementation Project Study, Report #3.
INSTITUTION Queensland Univ., Brisbane (Australia). Dept. of Education.
PUB DATE Jul 86
NOTE 46p.; For reports 1 and 2, see ED 247 589 and ED 258 208, respectively.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Problems; *Administrator Attitudes; Class Organization; Course Evaluation; Elementary Education; Foreign Countries; *Handwriting; *Inservice Teacher Education; Instructional Design; Instructional Improvement; *Instructional Innovation; *Instructional Materials; Letters (Alphabet); Questionnaires; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Response; Teacher Workshops; Teaching Methods; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS Australia

ABSTRACT

Assembled from perceptual data gathered from questionnaires, this report outlines teachers' and administrators' opinions based on their first year's experience teaching handwriting (the Beginner's Alphabet) to first grade children using a new syllabus. Nine supporting tables are included and response statistics are detailed (Appendix 1 contains samples of the actual questionnaires given). Note is taken of the fact that no empirical evidence was used to validate the reported data. The report describes four modes of inservice education and training that were available to the teachers (the first three were also available to school administrators): workshops, publications, advisory teacher consultancy, and school based consultancy. The report also discusses reported teaching method preferences, the nine main teaching difficulties cited by the respondents, and projected difficulties, with a list of requested assistance for 1986. Finally, the teaching of handwriting and the in-service education program are discussed, and concerns raised by regional staff on the program are cited (summaries of the regional reports are provided in appendix 2.) It is concluded that the planned project study was effectively executed and that, though much remains unsettled, some direction regarding further investigation of the new teaching method has been achieved. References are included. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED273977

Handwriting Implementation Project Study

Report #3

The Year in the Schools

July 1986

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Lloyd Logan

Judyth Sachs

Merle Warry

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. M. Sachs

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

This report is written for the research team of Jan Boys, John Dwyer, Lloyd Logan, Judyth Sachs and Merle Warry.

The research team acknowledges the assistance given by both the Department of Education, Queensland and the Department of Education, University of Queensland with this project. They thank particularly, Lyn Griffiths from the latter Department for her work in preparing and presenting the report.

CS 210 044

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Limitations of the Study	5
The Sample	6
(A) Inservice Education and Training: Classroom Teachers	7
• Workshops	7
• Publications	9
• Advisory Teacher Consultancy	10
• School Based Consultancy	11
(B) Classroom Organization: Classroom Teachers	13
(C) Method of Teaching: Classroom Teachers	14
(D) Inservice Education and Training: Administrators	16
• Workshops	17
• Publications	18
• Advisory Teacher Consultancy	18
(E) Difficulties and Ways Forward: Administrators	20
• Difficulties and Solutions 1985	20
• Difficulties Projected in 1986	22
• Requested Assistance for 1986	23
Discussion	24
• Teaching of Handwriting	24
• Inservice Education	25
• Summary of Regional Reports	30
Conclusion	30
References	32
Appendices	33

TABLES

Table 1: Respondents by class of school

Table 2: School administrators by substantive position

Table 3: Respondents by geographical location of school

Table 4: Value of departmental publications on the Beginner's Alphabet script and its teaching

Table 5: Value of the assistance from administrators and colleagues with teaching the Beginner's Alphabet

Table 6: Involvement of school administrators in the supervision of handwriting

Table 7: Emphasis given to selected aspects of handwriting

Table 8: Official publications on handwriting read by school administrators

Table 9: Value of in-service education modes to school administrators.

INTRODUCTION

This is the third report in the series documenting the implementation of a new handwriting syllabus in Queensland government schools. The Handwriting Implementation Project Study (HIPS) was undertaken on behalf of the Language Arts Curriculum Committee and the Inservice Education Committee of the Division of Primary Education. The first report, entitled Preparation for the Dissemination Phase published in August 1984, traced the development of the scripts and teaching style, the preparation of materials, and the training of the consultancy team. Reactions of the Target Teacher and Administrator Population Prior to Implementation, the second report, recorded the opinions of school personnel about the 'old' syllabus and the 'new' syllabus prior to its introduction into schools. This third report gives the opinions of teachers of Year 1 children and administrators in the Brisbane North Region after their first year's experience of teaching the Beginner's Alphabet.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study uses perceptual data collected by questionnaire from classroom teachers and administrators in one Brisbane education region. Reactions to the data were made by the Region's Director, the Project Officer and the Advisory Teachers. Discussions were held in two schools with the teachers and administrators. No empirical evidence was used to validate the reported data, for example, to confirm or negate the statements on standard of handwriting and teacher competency to write the script. Comments and conclusions should be read with these considerable limitations in mind.

THE SAMPLE

Questionnaires were sent to teachers who had taugnt Year 1 children in government schools and to school administrators within the Brisbane Northn Region during 1985 (Appendix 1). Responses were received from 157 teachers and 116 administrators in the 119 primary schools in the Region.

Table 1:

Respondents by class of school

		Class of School					
Position		1	2	3	4	5	(N)
Teacher	No	53	65	28	10	1	157
	%	33.8	41.4	17.8	6.4	0.6	100
Administrator	No	45	38	19	11	3	116
	%	38.8	32.6	16.4	9.5	2.6	100

The distribution of school administrators is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2:

School Administrators by Substantive position

Position	%	(N)
Principal	65.5	76
Deputy Principal	20.7	24
Assistant Principal Senior	2.6	3
Assistant Principal Junior	9.5	11
Other (Relieving positions)	1.7	2
TOTAL	100.0	116

The respondents were from metropolitan, provincial city and rural schools as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Respondents by geographical location of school

Position		Metropolitan	Provincial	Rural	(N)
Teacher	No	92	33	29	154
	%	59.7	21.4	18.8	100
Administrator	No	56	23	35	114
	%	49.1	20.2	30.7	100

(A) IN-SERVICE EDUCATION AND TRAINING (INSET) : CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Four modes of in-service education and training were available to teachers of Year 1 children during late 1984 and throughout 1985: workshops, departmental and commercial publications, consultancy from the advisory teachers and inspectors, and in school consultancy from administrators and colleagues.

Workshops

Ninety-four percent of the respondents had attended either a two day or a one day workshop. The majority considered that the inservice workshops had been highly effective in teaching them to write the script, providing the basis to revise their own style of handwriting, giving them confidence to proceed with teaching the new script, and developing a positive attitude to the changes.

The aspects of the workshop commented on as most useful were:

1. the opportunity to practise the script. Doing the various activities, it was claimed, gave an understanding of the difficulties children might experience in mastering the script and ways to overcome such problems.
2. teaching ideas for pre-writing activities, a suggested sequence for implementing the program, the correct language to use, and writing activities.
3. displays of resource materials.
4. the opportunity to discuss with fellow teachers problems they were experiencing in their classrooms.

Many teachers appreciated the information on the background to the new script and the rationale for its development and introduction. A large number simply stated that they had found everything done at the seminar to be most beneficial. The skill and patience of the advisory teachers was greatly appreciated.

Almost 75 percent of the respondents made no comment on the question 'What proved to be of little use from the course?' The 25 percent who did respond commented unfavourably on the following:

1. the videos.
2. the background to the development, which while interesting, could have been omitted.
3. the amount of practice on the script.
4. the short duration of the seminar.

Some 50 percent of the respondents considered that no additions were necessary. A large number however, wanted more attention to be given to teaching strategies and ideas including: a detailed guide to teaching the script, a guide to the time of year each stage should be mastered, and ideas on paper use. Many teachers would have liked more handouts and worksheets and more time with the assistance of colleagues and the advisory teachers to make their own materials. Some wanted more practice sessions. The Advisory Teachers, in response, pointed out that thick files on teaching ideas and materials for copying are available in the Resource Centres and directly from themselves during advisory visits. Also 'Make and Take' sessions are regularly conducted at Resource Centres outside set school hours.

Many teachers suggested the inclusion of a classroom demonstration lesson and samples of work so that they could see a progression of the script from year 1 to 7. The majority emphasized the importance of access to support from both the advisory teachers and school based consultants, that is, administrators and staff colleagues.

Publications

Official and commerical publications are available on the Beginner's Alphabet and its teaching; Table 4 displays the respondents reactions to the official publications.

Table 4

Value of the departmental publications on the Beginner's Alphabet script and its teaching

	Helpful (% Rounded)					
	Very	Quite	Little	Not	Hind rance	Not Applic-able
Teaching of Handwriting: A Handbook	69.0	27.0	2.0	1.0	0	1.0
What's New in the Teaching of Handwriting	13.0	33.0	29.0	1.0	0	24.0
Articles in the Press	0	6.0	20.0	33.0	4.0	38.0
Handouts from the Advisory Teachers	61.0	22.0	7.0	1.0	0	9.0

Twenty five respondents nominated publications other than those listed above that they had read. Of these, almost half had read `A Practice Book for Teacher', and one fifth `Handwriting for Beginners'. Other titles listed were `New way to Handwriting' by Spinks and Granam, `Getting Started with the New Handwriting', `Suggestions for Introducing Children to Lines'. A couple of teachers stated that some commerically produced books did not conform with the official script and could be misleading for parents.

One school had its own newsletter on handwriting which was distributed to all staff and parents.

Advisory Teacher Consultancy

Eighty-seven percent of the respondents were visited once (59%) or twice (28%) by an advisory teacher. Nine percent reported that they were not visited. Teachers rated the value of the visit as very helpful (39%), quite helpful (37%) a little helpful (13%) and not at all helpful (3%). The responses were justified in the following terms:

Very helpful: provided the opportunity to discuss problems and ways to solve them; new information, activities and materials; reassurance with the way the program was being taught; guidance in the progression of the program; and demonstration lesson or segment of a lesson; and, parents were included.

Quite helpful: similar comments to those above but with the statements that the visit would have been of more worth if teachers had been released from normal classroom duties for a discussion; more time had been allowed; and, demonstration lessons had been included.

A little helpful: similar comments to those above plus the visit was too early in the program; provided reassurances but no help on specific problems; and, the method of teaching was criticized but little help given.

School-based Consultancy

Respondents rated the assistance given to them in teaching the new script by school administrators and colleagues as shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Value of the assistance from administrators and colleagues with teaching the Beginner's Alphabet

	Helpful (% Rounded)					
	Very	Quite	Little	Not	Hindrance	Not Applicable
Principal	6.0	20.0	17.0	14.0	3.0	38.0
Deputy Principal	2.0	9.0	5.0	11.0	0	74.0
Asst Princ Jun. Primary	9.0	10.0	7.0	0	0	75.0
Asst Princ Sen. Primary	1.0	1.0	1.0	0	0	97.0
Colleagues Own School	26.0	36.0	15.0	5.0	0	19.0
Colleagues Other School	4.0	14.0	22.0	7.0	1.0	53.0

The table illustrates the important support role played by the Assistant Principal Junior Primary and colleagues in the teacher's own school. Three out of five respondents saw the principal as being involved in the program with some half of these viewing the support as very or quite helpful.

Involvement in the supervision of handwriting by position is given in Table 6. Data on principals of class 1 schools are differentiated since it is more likely for them to delegate the supervising duties than principals in the other schools given the structure of associate administrators in primary schools.

Table 6
Involvement of school adminstrators in the supervision of handwriting by position held.

	Involved % (% Rounded)	Not Involved %	N
Class I Principals	35.0	65.0	17
Class 2-5 Principals	88	12	59
Assistant Principals Jun.	100	0	11
Deputies	33	67	24
Assistant Principals Sen.	33	67	3
			114

(B) CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION: CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Respondents were asked to nominate the classroom organization used for the teaching of handwriting. Four patterns were given.

(a) Whole class lessons with all children working on the same materials.
(b) Whole class lessons with children working on similar materials but at different rates.
(c) Informal only, e.g. working with children when the need arises, not necessarily in special handwriting lessons.
(d) Totally individual handwriting programs.

Respondents added a fifth, `small group instruction' which is designated as (e).

Of the 157 respondents, 85 nominated a single pattern of organization and 72 nominated a combination. Of the teachers who nominated a single organization pattern, 43 stated (a), 41 stated (b), and 1 stated (d). The

combinations and the respective number of respondents for each are listed below.

1.(a) then proceeds to (b) (18)
2.(a) plus (c) (15)
3.(a) plus (b) plus (c) (13)
4.(a) plus (e) (11)
5.(b) plus (e) (4)
6.(a) plus (b) plus (e) (4)
7.(a) plus (b) plus (c) plus (e) (2)
8.(b) plus (c) (2)
9.(b) plus (d) (1), (a) plus (d) (1), (a) plus (b) plus (d) (1).

Of the 72 teachers who used more than one form of classroom organization 65 nominated a whole class lesson with all children working on the same material in conjunction with one or more alternatives. Where they nominated (e) the majority were conducting lessons with small groups or individual children on specific difficulties. One hundred and eight of the 157 respondents used whole class lessons with all children working on the same materials wholly or in combination with one or more alternatives.

(C) METHOD OF TEACHING: CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Respondents were asked to give information on selected aspects, namely the order used for teaching lower case letters, and the appropriateness of nominated types of paper.

The data on the emphasis given to pencil hold, posture, paper position and basic patterns are given in Table 7. Respondents used a four point

scale; no emphasis, occasionally emphasized, emphasized during handwriting lessons only, emphasized during handwriting lessons plus when necessary throughout the day.

Table 7

Emphasis given to selected aspects of handwriting

	Emphasis (% Rounded)			
	None	Occassional	Lessons Only	Lessons + as needed
Pencil Hold	3.0	2.0	1.0	95.0
Posture	3.0	4.0	13.0	80.0
Paper Position	3.0	9.0	22.0	67.0
Basic Patterns	4.0	7.0	50.0	39.0

Eighty-three percent of respondents considered that the practice of basic patterns did make a difference to pupil progress. When teaching the clockwise letters (m, n, h, k, b, p, j) the following emphasis was given.

1. The wedge shape (128 responses)
2. Slope (77 responses)
3. Fluent movement (76 responses)
4. Crisp turn at the top (45 responses)
5. Size of letter

In respect to slope, 86 percent of the respondents stated that there were children at the end of Year 1 who had difficulty achieving slope to their writing. Some 60 percent estimated that a quarter of the children experienced difficulty and another 26 percent up to a half of the children.

The order nominated for teaching the lower case letters is given below

with the number of responses.

1. Directional movement, e.g. clockwise, straight, etc. (121)
2. Integrated with phonics program (68)
3. Spatial groups, e.g. `body letter´, etc. (40)
4. Integrated with reading program (24)

Respondents were asked to comment on the usefulness of the red and blue lined paper which had been issued to ease the transition from writing on blank to lined paper. Eighty four percent said that the use of 8mm red and blue lines generally improved the standard of children´s writing. Sixty-nine percent thought that the new paper was useful in the transition period. The major criticism of those who did not view the paper as useful was that one line was insufficient. It was considered that by the time the children were ready to use the paper they wanted to write more than one line. This criticism was voiced also by a number of teachers who had replied positively to the question. In total almost 50 percent of respondents considered that more lines were needed. Some 20 percent of the respondents, however, considered that more than one line would cause confusion. Finally, a small group of teachers thought that the spacing between the lines was too small.

(D) IN-SERVICE EDUCATION AND TRAINING (INSET) ADMINISTRATORS

Three modes of inservice education and training were available for school administrators: workshops, departmental and commercial publications, and consultancy from the advisory teachers and the inspectorate.

Workshops

School administrators attended the following workshops:

(a) 3 x one and a half hour sessions (N = 16)

(b) 2 x one day sessions (N = 43)

(c) 1 x one half day session (N = 46)

The administrators reactions to the workshops echoed those of the classroom teachers. Answers to the question 'What proved to be useful in the course?' indicated the following:

1. the demonstrations and practice sessions were valued highly.
2. explanation of the rationale for the change was appreciated.
3. comments on teaching techniques and the materials handed out were valued.
4. provision for small group discussion was beneficial.
5. the ability of the people who conducted the course was recognized and praised.

Only one negative comment was made about any aspect of the course.

Respondents stated that more time was required to cover adequately the current course content. Like the classroom teachers they would have liked more emphasis on teaching method to solve specific problems they had encountered, and guidelines for pupil progression. Specific mention was made of the need to address the special difficulties encountered in small schools with multi-age classes. Also the problems associated with children from interstate was raised.

Again like the classroom teachers, the school administrators emphasized the need for follow-up courses for themselves.

To sum up, the response to the inservice education workshops was all but universally positive. The most important additions were seen to be more time and provision for follow-up activities.

Publications

Table 8 records the incidence of the departmental publications on handwriting read by the school administrators.

Table 8

Official publications on handwriting read by school administrators

Publication	No. of Responses
Teaching of Handwriting : A Handbook	115
What's New in the Teaching of Handwriting	101
Articles in the Press	82
Handouts from Advisory Teachers	96

Advisory Teacher Consultancy

The reported number of visits to schools by the advisory teachers ranged from none (16 percent) to five (3 percent) with one (33 percent) and two (33 percent) the most common. While all schools were serviced by the advisory teachers, some administrators chose not to be contacted. This is to be expected when 33 percent of the respondents stated that they were not responsible for supervising the teaching of handwriting in 1985, for

example, some Deputies and almost all Assistant Principals Senior Primary (see Table 6). Nine out of ten administrators contacted rated the advisory teacher's assistance as very helpful or quite helpful. This compares favourably with the reported value of inservice education workshops and official publications as shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Value of inservice education modes to school administrators

	Helpful (% Rounded)					
	Very	Quite	Little	Not	Hindrance	N/A
Inservice Workshops	81.0	15.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0
Adv. Tchr Consultancy	57.0	27.0	8.0	1.0	1.0	7.0
Depart. Publications	44.0	44.0	9.0	2.0	1.0	0

The duration of the visits ranged from half-an-hour to one-and-a-half days with a half-day or a whole-day the most common. Principals in small and isolated schools stated that it was essential for them to be given the same access to the advisory teachers as that enjoyed by their city and provincial colleagues. Most visits were initiated by 'the school', usually the principal or an associate administrator, with a small number attributed to teachers. Some 45 visits were reported to have been arranged at the initiative of the advisory teachers, however this number appears to have been significantly higher from the Advisory Teacher data.

Administrators reported the following outcomes from the advisory teacher visits:

1. <u>reassurance</u> that children were making satisfactory progress and that

the methods being used to teach the new handwriting were correct.

2. practical assistance given by the advisory teachers to the classroom teachers to solve specific problems.
3. information on resources and publications.
4. reinforcement of the ideas and concepts introduced at the workshops.
5. parent inservice education programs.

(E) DIFFICULTIES AND WAYS FORWARD: ADMINISTRATORS

Respondents were asked to state any difficulties they had experienced with the teaching of handwriting in their schools during 1985 and to describe the ways they had coped with them. They were asked also to list difficulties they foresaw occurring in 1986 and the assistance they would find most helpful.

Difficulties and Solutions 1985

The following difficulties and ways they were met were reported by administrators.

1. Competency with the script.

   Many teachers did not feel confident of their ability to write the script correctly either for instruction in formal lessons or for general blackboard work. Practice sessions, encouragement and reassurance from colleagues, administrators and advisory teachers were ways used to overcome the problem.

2. Staff untrained in the script.

   Due to inter and intra school transfers, the employment of supply and relieving teachers, and the deployment of some specialist teachers,

some staff were required to teach writing who had not attended the inservice education workshops. On-site training by colleagues, administrators and advisory teachers was used to overcome this difficulty.

3. Composite classes

Where this was seen as an issue schools reported the following approaches:

(a) teaching the new script to all the children irrespective of their designated year.

(b) teaching the new script to Year 1 and 'allowing' the other children to use it.

(c) giving the children in the other grades experience in reading the new script.

4. Process writing and script production.

Some difficulties were reported that when children were involved in process writing they experienced problems with producing correct letter forms. (This problem is not peculiar however to the Beginner's Alphabet script). In these cases, the decision was taken to emphasize the importance of ideational flow over correct letter form.

5. Pupils from interstate.

Teachers gave special attention to pupils in order to assist them with the transition to the new script.

6. The mechanics of producing the script.

The most common difficulty reported was attaining the correct slope of the letters followed by pencil grip. Other difficulties included sitting position, letter groupings, letter joins and writing on the line. Continual correction and practice were used to overcome these

problems. One school attached plastic pencil grips to the pencils until children had mastered the correct pencil hold.

7. Lined paper

Some confusion was reported over the type of paper to use and when to use it. Advice was sought from the advisory teachers on this matter. A number of schools reported delays in receiving the issues of lined paper and had printed their own as a stop-gap measure. Delays were due mainly to school administrators not following a new ordering system that had been introduced and explained both at seminars and in the Education Office Gazette.

8. Differences about the correct-scripts and style.

Some respondents claimed that there were differences in style between the models taught at the inservice workshop and those given in the 'Teaching of Handwriting: A Handbook'. The conflict was resolved by deciding on the form which best fitted their children.

9. Parents

The unfamiliarity of parents with the new script, in some instances a lack of co-operation, and the purchase of commercial materials which were different from the official script, were reported causes of concern. Schools had run parent education programs and used parents as voluntary teacher-aides.

Difficulties Projected in 1986

Sixty three of the respondents either made no response or replied 'none' to the question, 'What, if any, difficulties do you see with the teaching of handwriting in 1986?'. Those who do envisage experiencing problems stated the following issues.

1. Teacher proficiency with the script and style.
2. Teachers who had received no training program on the script during 1985 and were assigned to teach Year 1 either full-time or on relieving staff.
3. Composite classes, particularly the Year 2-3 grouping.
4. Transition from the Beginner's Alphabet to the Queensland Modern Cursive script.
5. Supply of materials, specifically the correct paper and pupil workbooks (only to schools which had not followed corrected ordering procedures).

Requested Assistance for 1986

The following three modes of assistance were requested in the order listed below.

1. Advisory teacher visits both to work with individual teachers in classrooms and to advise administrators on whole school matters concerning handwriting.
2. Inservice education workshops for all people concerned. There was a strong opinion that all teachers, regardless of the year they were teaching, should be trained in the new handwriting including specialist staff. Isolated schools should be given special consideration. Further inservice education should be provided for parents.
3. Publications requested were: practice books or worksheets for teachers and pupils; and newsletters providing information on the progress of implementation, ideas and resources available.

DISCUSSION

Two issues are discussed, the first focussing on two aspects of the mechanics of handwriting teaching, and the second on the inservice education program.

Teaching of Handwriting

A major limitation of the study is the lack of observational data on classroom practice and organization. The reported data raise two issues of concern to the project leaders. One is the high incidence of whole class instruction, the other relates to the teaching of lower case letters.

All but one of the 157 classroom teacher respondents reported employing whole class organization as the basic instructional format. Over half (54%) had children working on the same task with 26 percent of these catering for differences in rate. The remaining 46 percent of teachers used a combination of small group and individual tutoring variations within a whole class orientation. The reported practice is directly contrary to the procedures recommended by the Advisory Teachers both during consultancy visits and the inservice seminars. As the project officer said 'Whole class lessons are out!' but this is not the case it seems in practice. Further investigation, preferably through classroom observation, is required to establish the teaching and organization procedures actually being practised and the reasons for the continuation of whole class based procedures if that proves to be the dominant mode.

The second issue relates to the order for teaching lower case letters. The data show a high correlation between the teaching of lower case letters

with phonics programs or in spatial groupings. Both these practices were strongly discouraged at seminars and Advisory Teacher consultations. The data raise issues which require attention in planning and executing future programs on handwriting and also has implications for other subject areas.

Mastering alternative teaching and classroom organization procedures is a higher order learning task than mastering curriculum content, in this case a new handwriting script. Therefore different inservice education programs are required to achieve ends of different orders. It is realistic to expect teachers to master the elements of writing a new script through models in publications and supervised practice at short term seminars. It is not realistic, however, to expect teachers to 'retune' in Joyce and Showers (1980) terms, their beliefs about and practices for teaching handwriting without long term, consistent, skilled, repeated assistance. Much of this assistance will be in the job-embedded consultation, coaching, clinical supervision and narration all of which are both time and staff intensive. Given the staffing constraints and demands on the current Advisory staff, job-embedded professional development is the task of the school administrators. Unless they carry out the school-based component of the planned change by providing on hand advice, models and assurance the changes to writing instruction will tend to be limited to the cosmetic. There is a real danger that the children will learn a new script but with minimal or no revision of teaching procedures, classroom organization and evaluative criteria.

Inservice Education

The study illustrates a co-ordinated multi-mode approach to

introducing and institutionalizing a new practice in schools, in this instance a handwriting syllabus. Each mode has a specific function.

1. Teacher workshops - to train teachers to produce and teach the new script and to understand the rationale and methodology.
2. Administrators workshops- to train administrators to supervise the teaching of the new script.
3. External consultancy - to advise teachers and administrators on problems they are encountering with the new syllabus, and to provide reassurance and encouragement.
4. Internal consultancy - to supervise teachers by providing on-site assistance on demand with solving job-embedded problems, guidance with programs, and reassurance.
5. Publications - to provide information on content and process, and with the specifics of teaching the new script.

The modes, singly and in combination, are valued differentially. This underscores the necessity to provide a range of modes in order to achieve an effective match between mode and a teacher's preferred learning style, and consistent access to individualized forms of assistance.

A second major point is that the study reiterates previous findings on the important role played by a small, cohesive, well-trained and effectively led team in planning and executing deliberate changes in practice. In this instance such a team performed the key tasks of : initial training for teachers and administrators through workshops; support and guidance through external consultancy; and the dissemination of teaching ideas and general information through publications. The initial training workshops were rated highly effective by both teachers and

administrators. Both groups also valued highly the advisory visits and nominated positive outcomes in respect to practical assistance, reassurance, reinforcement of ideas and skills, and information on resources and teaching ideas. These responses reflect those reported in the previous report where short courses and advisory teacher visits were stated to be the most favoured inservice education modes (Sachs, Logan 1985, 28 and 36).

The characteristics of the workshops themselves are worth rehearsing. The respondents approved the practical emphasis, the participatory nature, the blend of theory and practice and the competency and style of the leaders. Participants' requests for more emphasis on the mechanics of teaching the script need to be weighed-up against the time available and the quality of post-workshop support available from external and internal consultancy and publications, and on the desire of the Advisory Team to emphasize rationale and methodology.

The capacity to provide on-site consultancy is a requisite for effective job-embedded learning and therefore for successful implementation of new practices. In the current program school administrators are viewed as the major source of in-school consultancy. Colleague consultancy will increase as the program proceeds, and already is a major source of assistance. However, the principal will be responsible for ensuring that such consultancy is accessible for all staff. A potential advantage of the incremental mode of introducing a new syllabus, as in the present instance, is the opportunity provided for schools to develop their own consultancy service to the point of being self-sufficient with administrators and staff members all developing areas of particular specific expertise available to

27

colleagues.

The involvement of school administrators varies both across and within schools. It is to be expected, given the current emphasis on the junior school, that in class 1 schools, the assistant-principal - junior-primary post-holders would be heavily involved and deputies and assistant-principals - senior-primary less so. Similarly the lower involvement of class 1 principals is not surprising. The data raise some questions however about the quality of assistance provided by principals. Only a quarter of the teachers rated the principal's assistance as very (8%) or quite (20%) helpful.

This response is lower than that given in the previous report (Sachs, Logan 1985, 35) but the data are not directly comparable since the previous sample included the total teacher population while this sample is limited to teachers of Year 1. However, some further attention is warranted to ascertain:

1. the supervisory practices principals use to assist teachers with job-embedded learning, for example, consultancy, coaching, clinical supervision, reviewing programs and children's work, informal discussion, etc.
2. the use made by principals of advisory teachers to improve their own supervisory practices in respect to handwriting.
3. the training principals receive in this and other programs, in specific supervisory practices.

The importance of the concrete is underlined in requested and approved elements of both the workshop and consultancy responses. For example,

demonstration lessons, examples of pupil's work and teacher's programs, clear criteria for judging pupil progress, and practical teaching tips and worksheets are all commented on positively and noted for more emphasis by teachers and administrators.

Publications are the 'cold' mode in this current program with official publications being far more influential than commercial ones. Nearly every teacher (96%) valued as very (69%) or quite (27%) helpful the publication 'Teaching of Handwriting: A Handbook'.

In summary, the inservice education data is highly commendatory of the workshops, the external consultancy and the publications. It is more reserved about the internal consultancy provided by principals. To date, the study illustrates the importance of the following:

1. viewing change as a learning activity. Teacher and principal data show that they need supervised skill practice, guidance and reassurance in order to master both the content (script and style) and the process (teaching tactics) to change their practices. The assistance is required over a prolonged period and needs to match the preferred learning style and readiness of the learner. Therefore multi-mode programs are essential.
2. the critical role of a well trained and led cadre of credible experts situated in a region to train and to support teachers and administrators.
3. the role of modelling and the concrete in adult learning and of the practicality ethic in inservice education.
4. the in-school consultancy capacity to capitalize on the 'learning moment' by providing assistance and reassurance through job-embedded

activity.

5. the need to maintain contact with small schools.
6. the important role of the project leader in supporting the Advisory Teachers professionally and personally.

Summary of Regional Reports

A summary of reports from each of the Regional staff on the program is included as Appendix 2. The summary is in an abbreviated form but conveys some of the same concerns that have been raised by the more detailed study of the Brisbane North Region. The following are examples, the key role of school administrators as support personnel; the needs of remote teachers for encouragement, support and guidance; increased number of school visits; revision workshops for administrators and staff; more relief wanted; annual implementation model should be continued; the concern over the continuation of support services in the future; and mechanical difficulties such as slope, pencil hold, confusion of `l' and `t' and problems of adjustment to lined paper of different types. One Region also noted a theme that has run through much of the data - teachers see the change as a change of script not of methodology.

Conclusion

This third report documents the introduction of a new handwriting syllabus in Year 1 classes as reported by teachers and school administrators. The data indicate that within the limited resources available the project has been planned and executed most effectively by the project officer and advisory teacher staff. Teachers of Year 1 have been

taught to write the new script and have received guidance and reassurance through the consultancy service and publications on its teaching in their classrooms. School administrators also have undergone a basic training program.

The evidence, although limited, on the use of the recommended teaching procedures is less encouraging. There is sufficient data to suggest that further investigation should be carried out to establish the degree to which the new methods are being used. If the adoption rate is low, as the data suggest, the problem then becomes one of staff development. Some questions to be answered will be:

1. What training program is required to help teachers revise their procedures for teaching handwriting?
2. How can this be provided most efficiently and effectively?
3. Who will conduct the program and what training do they need to undergo?

Given the current conditions school-administrator and peer-assistance tactics will occupy a key position in a strategy designed to revise teaching procedures. Secondly, larger schools (Classes 1 and 2) will be expected to become self-sufficient in terms of their own staff-development making minimal demands on the Advisory Teacher service. This will free the Advisory Teachers to carry out their specialized support role and to provide in-school assistance to remote schools and people in particular need. Whatever direction is taken, school administrators can expect to be challenged to exercise their curriculum and instructional leadership capacities both in program planning and in-class teaching.

REFERENCES

Joyce, B. and Showers, S. (1980) 'Training Ourselves the Message of Research'. Educational Leadership 37(4).

Sachs, J. and Logan, L. (1985) Reactions of the Target Teacher and Administrators Population Prior to Implementation. ERIC ED 258 208.

APPENDIX 1: Classroom Teacher Questionnaire

Administrators Questionnaire

APPENDIX 2: Summary of Progress Reports From Regions on the Introduction of Handwriting

ADMINISTRATORS' QUESTIONNAIRE 1985

Please answer all questions in terms of the school you were in during 1985.

(A) General Information

1. Class of school in 1985 (Please tick)
   1 ____ 3 ____ 5 ____
   2 ____ 4 ____

2. Location of school?
   Metropolitan ____
   Provincial City ____
   Rural ____

3. Substantive Position (Please tick)
   Principal ____
   Deputy Principal ____
   Assistant Principal Senior Primary ____
   Assistant Principal Junior Primary ____
   Other (Please specify) _____
   _____

4. Were you responsible for supervising the teaching of handwriting?
   Yes ____ No ____

(B) Inservice Education on 1985 Handwriting Syllabus

5. Please tick the inservice that you had.
   (a) 3 x one and a half hour sessions ____
   (b) 2 x one day sessions ____
   (c) 1 x one half day workshop ____

6. Please comment on the following.
   (a) What proved to be useful in the course?

_____

_____

_____

(.../2)

6. (b) What proved to be of little use?

_____

_____

_____

(c) What else should have been included?

_____

_____

_____

7. Which of the following publications have you read? (Please tick)

(a) Teaching of Handwriting: A Handbook ____

(b) What's New in the Teaching of Handwriting ____

(c) Articles in the press ____

(d) Hand outs from Advisory Teachers ____

(e) Other (Please specify) _____

_____

8. How many times did the Advisory Teachers visit your school during 1985?
(Please tick)

None	____	3	____	6 plus	____
1	____	4	____		
2	____	5	____		

9. How did you rate the value of those visits?
(Please tick)

Very helpful	1	____	Not at all helpful	4	____
Quite helpful	2	____	A hindrance	5	____
A little helpful	3	____	Not applicable	6	____

(.../3)

10. Please describe briefly the nature of the Advisory Teacher's visit?

(a) Approximate length of each visit? _____

(b) Who initiated the visit? _____

(c) What did you learn? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. Rate the value for your teacher(s) of the following:

Very helpful	1	Not helpful	4
Quite helpful	2	A hindrance	5
A little helpful	3	Not applicable	NA

(a) Inservice courses	1	2	3	4	5	NA
(b) Advisory Teacher services	1	2	3	4	5	NA
(c) Departmental publications	1	2	3	4	5	NA

12. What, if any, difficulties occurred with the teaching of handwriting in 1985? (Please comment on each of these following questions).

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. How did you cope with them?

_____

_____

_____

_____

(.../4)

14. What, if any, difficulties do you see with the teaching of handwriting in 1986?

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. What assistance would you find helpful in 1986?

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

1985: YEAR ONE CLASSROOM TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

(A) General Information

1. Class of school? (Please tick)

1	____	3	____	5	____
2	____	4	____		

2. Location of school? (Please tick)

Metropolitan	____
Provincial City	____
Rural	____

(B) Inservice Education on 1985 Handwriting Syllabus

3. Please tick the inservice that you had.
Workshop run by the advisory teachers at a central location for Year 1 teachers:

(a) 2 x one day workshop	____
(b) 1 x one day workshop	____
(c) 1 x one half day workshop	____
(d) other	____

4. Please comment on the following.

(a) What proved to be useful from the course?

_____

_____

_____

(b) What proved to be of little use?

_____

_____

_____

(.../2)

(c) What else should have been included?

_____

_____

_____

5. Rate the value of the following publications.

Very helpful	1	Not helpful	4
Quite helpful	2	A hindrance	5
A little helpful	3	Not Applicable	NA

(a) Teaching of Handwriting: A Handbook	1	2	3	4	5	NA
(b) What's New in the Teaching of Handwriting	1	2	3	4	5	NA
(c) Articles in the press	1	2	3	4	5	NA
(d) Hand outs from the Advisory Teachers	1	2	3	4	5	NA

(e) Other (Please specify) _____

_____

_____

6. How many times did the Advisory Teachers visit you during 1985? (Please tick)

None	____	3	____	6 plus	____
1	____	4	____		
2	____	5	____		

7. How do you rate the value of those visits?

Very helpful	1	____
Quite helpful	2	____
A little helpful	3	____
Not at all helpful	4	____
A hindrance	5	____

(.../3)

8. Please explain the reasons for your response in item 7.

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. How do you rate the assistance given to you in your teaching of handwriting by the following people?

Very Helpful	1	Not at all helpful	4
Quite helpful	2	A hindrance	5
A little helpful	3	Not applicable	NA

a)	Principal	1	2	3	4	5	NA
b)	Deputy Principal	1	2	3	4	5	NA
c)	Assistant Principal Junior Primary	1	2	3	4	5	NA
d)	Assistant Principal Senior Primary	1	2	3	4	5	NA
e)	Other teacher(s) in the school	1	2	3	4	5	NA
f)	Colleagues in other schools	1	2	3	4	5	NA
g)	Advisory teachers	1	2	3	4	5	NA
h)	Inspectors	1	2	3	4	5	NA
i)	Others (please specify)	1	2	3	4	5	NA

_____

_____

_____

10. Please comment on the effectiveness of your inservice experiences on:

Developing your competence to:

(a) Write the script

_____

_____

(b) Teach the script

_____

_____

(C) Classroom Organizations

11. How many classes of Year One children were there in your school last year?
(Please tick appropriate box)

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5+ ☐

12. How were children organised for the teaching of handwriting?
(Please tick the appropriate boxes)

(a) Whole class lessons with all children working on the same materials. ☐

(b) Whole class lessons with children working on similar material, but at differing rates. ☐

(c) Informal only, eg. working with children when the need arises, not necessarily in special handwriting lessons. ☐

(d) Totally individual handwriting programs. ☐

(e) Other, please specify. ☐

(D) Method

13. Indicate the degree of emphasis you placed on handwriting in Year One.

1. No emphasis
2. Occasionally emphasised
3. Emphasised during handwriting lessons only
4. Emphasised during handwriting lessons, plus when necessary throughout the day.

Pencil Hold	1	2	3	4
Posture	1	2	3	4
Paper Position	1	2	3	4
Basic Patterns	1	2	3	4

14. Did emphasis on the practice of basic patterns in the new program (eg. Handbook p23), make any difference to pupil progress? Yes ☐ No ☐
(Please tick)

15. Which teaching order was used for the lower case letters?
(Please tick appropriate boxes)

(a) Don't know ☐

(b) Directional movement, eg. clockwise, straight and so on. ☐

(c) Spatial groups, eg. 'body letters' and so on. ☐

(d) Integrated with phonics program. ☐

(e) Integrated with reading program. ☐

(f) Other, please specify ☐

_____

_____

16. In 1985, sheets of paper with one set of red and blue lines were issued for the first time. Was this paper useful in the transition period from blank paper to lines?

[YES] [NO]

Comments _____

_____

17. Do you feel that the standard of children's writing improved through the use of the 8mm red and blue lines?

[YES] [NO]

18. When teaching the clockwise letters, ie. 'm', 'n', 'h', 'k', 'b', 'p', 'j'. which aspect/s received most emphasis
(please tick appropriate box)

(a) Don't know ☐

(b) Crisp turn at the top ☐

(c) The wedge shape ☐

(d) Slope ☐

(e) Fluent movement ☐

(f) Size of letter ☐

E. Style

19. By the end of Year One, were there any children who had difficulty achieving slope to their writing?

[YES] [NO]

20. If yes, what percentage approximately? 42

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF REGIONAL REPORTS ON HANDWRITING IMPLEMENTATION

(Prepared by Inservice Education Section for Primary Inservice Education Standing Committee).

BRISBANE WEST REGION

* Importance of good handwriting model in middle and upper schools
* Knowledge and expertise of administrators are keys to inter-school support systems
* Some teachers are not teaching handwriting in all lessons
* Some teachers assume that once the script has been taught, facility has been acquired and will be retained.

BRISBANE NORTH REGION

Whole staff workshops during pupil free days. Concerns of upper school teachers:

(i) Are seminars going to continue throughout the school e.g. each year level?

(ii) Will advisory teachers be available?

(iii) What resource will be available?

School-based support for Year 1 and 2 teachers - visit schools once.

NORTH WEST REGION

In 1986, Advisory teacher to be appointed (based at Longreach). Will still require additional support from Brisbane South. Additional financial support will be required because of distances ($6,000.000).

PENNINSULA

* Limited attendance (50) imposed at some seminars.

* Advisory visits to all schools

* Number of seminars where whole school staff have attended

* Implementation beyond Year 1 restricted except in some small schools 1 and 2, few 1 and 3 and three larger schools. Year 1 and 2 where they are family groupings.

* Necessary for all advisory teachers to meet twice a year.

NORTHERN

Sandra Nawell, Advisory Teacher Northern Region -

Given Martin, District Relieving Teacher, Fitzgerald, additional resource teacher serving Mackay.

1985 - J.C.U. - not envisaged in '86 or '87 - too much time in '85.

2 advisory visits to all teachers a year - 1 not enough.

'86 and '87 most time in teaching teachers to become fluent in Beginners Alphabet and Queensland Modern Cursive.

Smaller schools need more assistance - remote classroom teachers need encouragement, support and guidance.

More T.R.S. days.

DARLING DOWNS REGION

Program is typical of all regional reports

'85 School advisory visits
Two day teacher seminars
One day principal seminars
Parent
Student groups

'86 Teacher aides 1984 - 1986
Pre-school teachers
Idea - sharing workshops after school to share problems, experiences, new ideas and methods

Comment

Some principals and staffs would like revision workshops. More school visits requested. Some sort of regular letter or communication.

BRISBANE SOUTH REGION

Sally Watkin's view of support required -

* seminar format should be continued
* classroom support in 1st year of implementation
* college students not receiving adequate in-service

Merle O'Donovan -

* seminars for Year 1 and 2 teachers, teacher aides successful
* question of whether classroom support will be as effective in '86

Points noticed -

* Children's Beginners Script is vertical not sloping
* Pencil hold is poor
* Writing is not neat
* Problem of adjustment to lined paper of different types

* Children are confusing "l" and "t"
* Teachers see change of script not methodology
* Schools could speed up implementation

WIDE BAY REGION

* Implementation on year-by-year basis should be continued
* More teacher relief
* Schools are appointing handwriting co-ordinators
* Provision of resources necessary - financial
* Need for extra advisory teachers for school support.

---?--